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Preservation

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ADDRESS

Of the Board of Managers of the American Colonization Society to the Public.

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THE period has arrived when the *American Colonization Society* is called to increased activity and extended operations. The attention of the Society has hitherto been principally engaged in collecting and diffusing information. The information thus collected is sufficient to satisfy every candid and judicious inquirer, that the establishment of a colony on the west coast of Africa is safe and practicable, and that it will be of great benefit both to this country and to Africa. We believe, likewise, that there is a debt of justice and of moral obligation due from the people of this country to Africans, and their descendants in both continents, which can be discharged more satisfactorily and beneficially to each, in this way, than in any other. The board of Managers, therefore, some time since, came to the resolution of commencing the colony as soon as funds could be procured, and the necessary arrangements made. The Board have since been engaged in preparatory measures for these arrangements, a brief statement of which it is proposed to lay before the public. In the number of circumstances which have since occurred to strengthen their hands and encourage their hearts, to animate their zeal and quicken their diligence, they gratefully recognise the smiles of Providence on their humble efforts.

It is already known to the public, that the Managers laid before Congress, at the last session, a great variety of documents, and other valuable information, relative to the proposed colony and the slave trade, selections from which have been published by that body, with the Second Annual Report of the Society. The shortness of the session, and the mass of other important business before Congress, did not leave sufficient time for the discussion and consideration of the question of colonization. At the close of the session, however, an important law passed, entitled "An act, in addition to the acts prohibiting the slave trade." This law was zealously supported by the friends of the Society, and shortly after its passage a committee was appointed by the Board to wait on the President of the United States and the heads of departments, to tender the services of the Managers in any way in which they might be useful in carrying it into effect. From the measures adopted by the executive, it is probable, that there will be a number of captured negroes to be provided for before the end of the year; and assurances having been given,

that if the Society would procure a proper situation in Africa, the captured negroes should be put under its care, and be provided for at the public expense, the course to be pursued by the Board could no longer remain doubtful. A number of free people of colour in different parts of the United States have already offered themselves for the colony. To select those best qualified to lay the foundation of this infant establishment, the Managers feel is of the utmost importance to its future character and prosperity. To aid in this and other important preparatory measures, the Board has appointed the Rev. William Meade, of Virginia, agent of the Society. To those who know Mr. Mead, the value of his labours and the importance of his pastoral services, this appointment will be one of the highest pledges which the Managers can give to the public of the importance of the duties in which they are engaged, and of their zeal and perseverance in their discharge.

The Managers have entered upon these duties, and engaged in these measures, with an humble dependence upon Divine Providence, and a firm reliance on the justice, humanity, and liberality of their fellow citizens, that the necessary pecuniary aid will be afforded for the prosecution of their plans. For the purpose of collecting funds, and of giving and procuring information, agents will be sent to the different cities in the United States, and to such other places as will be convenient. It is hoped that associations will be formed in different parts of the United States to aid the Society. Over so widely extended a country much must be left to the voluntary exertions of the people.

We have, however, now to make a more pressing call for immediate relief and aid. A few days since, the hon. Wm. H. Crawford, Secretary of the Treasury, one of the Vice Presidents of the Society, transmitted to the Board of Managers an advertisement in a Georgia newspaper, offering for sale, on the 4th of May next, thirty or forty negroes, who had been introduced into the state in violation of the law prohibiting the slave trade. (1) The law of Georgia, directing these sales, passed Dec. 19th, 1817, and may be found in the appendix to the Second Annual Report of the Society, p. 91. letter I. By the 3d section of that law, it is provided, "That if, previous to any sale of any such persons of colour, the Society for colonizing the free persons of colour, within the United States, will undertake to transport them to Africa, or any other foreign place, which they may procure as a colony for free persons of colour, at the sole expense of said Society, and shall likewise pay to his excellency the governor all expenses incurred by the state since

they have been captured and condemned, his excellency the governor is authorized and requested to aid in promoting the benevolent views of said Society in such manner as he may deem expedient."

The Board unanimously determined to avail themselves of the privilege contained in this law, and to send an agent to Georgia to comply with the conditions, and to take charge of these unhappy victims of violence and fraud, for the purpose of returning them to their native soil. Preparations are making, with the aid of the government, for a safe asylum, (2) where they will be provided for and instructed till the colony can be prepared for their reception. Providence has thus enlarged the sphere of usefulness and the field of exertion for the Society. The Managers are called to more active duty, and an opportunity is thus given to the public, in the commencement of our operations, to test the sincerity of those expressions of detestation so frequently uttered against the slave trade, and of those frequent professions of sympathy for the abused and oppressed Africans. The call is urgent, the occasion pressing, the time short; much is to be done in a few days, or these unhappy beings will be beyond our reach. It is supposed that about five thousand dollars may be required for this object; and as there is not time to make personal application to individuals, it is requested that the Auxiliary Societies and individuals favourable to this object, will make immediate exertions to raise funds to enable the Board to comply with the conditions of the Georgia law. Money collected for this purpose, and donations for the general object of the Society, may be forwarded to *David English*, cashier of the Union Bank of Georgetown, District of Columbia, Treasurer of the Society.

We know that we commence our operations and make this call at a time peculiarly embarrassing. Times and seasons are in the hands of Him who doeth what seemeth him right, and can overrule all to our good. He who giveth for such objects but lendeth to the Lord. We have followed what we believe to be the openings of Providence. This time may be selected to try our faith and test our sincerity. The widow's mite was more acceptable than the costly offerings of the great. Will not, then, the sacrifices now made in a proper spirit, be more acceptable than the offerings from the overflowings of abundance?

By order of the Board of Managers,

E. B. CALDWELL, *Sec'y.*

JNO. UNDERWOOD, *Recording Sec'y.*

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(Note 1.)

From the Georgia paper.

SALE OF AFRICAN SLAVES.

On Tuesday, the 4th of May next, in the town of Milledgeville, will be exposed to public sale, to the highest bidder, between thirty and forty prime African slaves, which have been taken possession of by the state of Georgia in consequence of their having been introduced contrary to the laws of this State, and of the United States. Indisputable titles will be made, and prompt payment required.

By order of the Governor,

March 6, 1819.

CHARLES WILLIAMSON, Agent.

(Note 2.)

George W. P. Custis, Esq. of Arlington, the grandson of Mrs. Washington, cheerfully offered the use of his Island near Cape Charles, at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, and accompanied the offer with a refusal to accept any compensation. It is called Smith's Island ; and is happily adapted, and most favourably located for the purpose ; and has been selected by the President of the United States for the captured Africans, till they can be sent to Africa.

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

ART. I.—This Society shall be called, “The American Society for colonizing the free people of colour of the United States.”

ART. II.—The object to which its attention is to be exclusively directed, is to promote and execute a plan for colonizing (with their consent) the free people of colour residing in our country, in Africa, or such other place as Congress shall deem most expedient. And the Society shall act, to effect this object, in co-operation with the general government, and such of the states as may adopt regulations upon the subject.

ART. III.—Every citizen of the United States, who shall subscribe these articles, and be an annual contributor of one dollar to the funds of the Society, shall be a member. On paying a sum not less than thirty dollars, at one subscription, shall be a member for life.

ART. IV.—The officers of this Society shall be, a President, Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Recorder, and a Board of Managers, composed of the above named officers, and twelve other members of the Society. They shall be annually elected by the members of the Society, at their annual meeting on the Saturday preceding new year’s day, and continue to discharge their respective duties till others are appointed.

ART. V.—It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the Society, and of the Board of Managers, and to call meetings of the Society, and of the Board, when he thinks necessary, or when required by any three members of the Board.

ART. VI—The Vice-Presidents, according to seniority, shall discharge these duties in the absence of the President.

ART. VII.—The Secretary shall take minutes of the proceedings, prepare and publish notices, and discharge such other duties as the Board, or the President, or, in his absence, the Vice-President, according to seniority, (when the Board is not sitting,) shall direct. And the Recorder shall record the proceedings and the names of the members, and discharge such other duties as may be required of him.

ART. VIII.—The Treasurer shall receive and take charge of the funds of the Society, under such security as may be prescribed by the Board of Managers; keep the accounts, and exhibit a statement of receipts and expenditures at every annual meeting, and discharge such other duties as may be required of him.

ART. IX.—The Board of Managers shall meet on the first Monday in January, the first Monday in April, the first Monday in July, and the first Monday in October, every year, and at such other times as the President may direct. They shall conduct the business of the Society, and take such measures for effecting its object as they shall think proper, or shall be directed at the meetings of the Society, and make an annual report of their proceedings. They shall also fill up all vacancies occurring during the year, and make such by-laws for their government as they may deem necessary, provided the same are not repugnant to this constitution.

ART. X.—Every Society which shall be formed in the United States to aid in the object of this Association, and which shall co-operate with its funds for the purposes thereof, agreeably to the rules and regulations of this Society, shall be considered auxiliary thereto; and its officers shall be entitled to attend and vote at all meetings of the Society, and of the Board of Managers.

The Board of Managers of the American Colonization Society beg leave to lay before you the following letter from their agent, the Rev. Mr. Mead, relative to a most interesting subject, to which they some time since solicited the public attention. They return their warmest thanks to those from whose benevolence they have received contributions; and they hope that, although a considerable sum is still necessary for the attainment of their object, their appeal to the humanity of their fellow-citizens will be effectual.

Washington City, May 19th, 1819.

Milledgeville, May 4th, 1819.

My Dear Sir: This day, which was to have been the day of bondage and sorrow to the poor Africans, on whose account I was sent to this place, has been turned into a day of liberty and joy to them. At least, I confidently hope that the arrangements we have made will eventuate thus happily, and that, before the year is ended, they will see their native land and all which they love most on earth. The Governor has postponed the sale, and afforded me an opportunity of seeking, among the humane and generous of this southern country, the means of their redemption. I enter upon this task to-morrow, by convening the citizens of this place to form an Auxiliary Society. An attempt has been made to recover these poor creatures into the hands of certain individuals who were concerned either in their first capture, or in their purchase and introduction into this state—but there is, I hope, nothing to fear from this combination of avarice and oppression against the claims of justice and humanity. I arrived here on Saturday evening, and on Sunday morning walked out to their little encampment in the vicinity of the town, to see them. As I approached their habitation I found them gathered around a good old man, into whose care they had been given, and who was telling them that some good people had sent me to prevent their sale, and carry them back to Africa. I wish you could have been with me to have witnessed their joy; they crowded around me, and by turns took hold of my hands, and, in broken English, expressed their gratitude. They at first (as the old man told me) would scarcely believe it; they had never heard of any such thing before, and it is no wonder they should doubt it. Even the next day one of them said to him, "white people never send negroes back to Africa; I never see my children again." The old man, who had gained their confidence, asked them if he ever told them a lie, and this seemed to encourage their faith. A very strong attachment has grown up between them and him, and I have seen them shed tears while speaking to them about leaving him. He asked one, who seemed more overjoyed than the rest at the thought of going, "if he wanted to leave old Daniel, (for that is his name,) who had taken such good care of him, and given him so much good messes?" The poor fellow hung his head as if convicted of ingratitude, and then said, "he did not want to leave him, but wanted home better;" and promised that if he would go to Africa he would serve him two, three years, and give him too much good things." Indeed, my dear

friend, a few moments were sufficient to satisfy me that they were the children of the same God with ourselves, having the same affections, and capable of the same enjoyments. On their countenance I could see written these memorable words : " Am I not a man and a brother?" Some of them so strikingly resemble some of our American negroes, that I could have sworn I had seen them before, had I met them in any other place, or under different circumstances. Some of them have very sensible and amiable countenances, while others are vacant and unmeaning. They were captured in two parcels from Angola and Fowlah, and brought together at the Rio Pangos, from whence they were shipped. I learned the history of each one, and discovered that, so far from all being taken in war and sold, instead of being killed, as the advocates of the slave trade maintain, not one of these were prisoners of war, but most of them seized by wretches hired for the purpose, in the fields, on the road, or sleeping in their houses. They express, by word, and the dismal contortion of their faces, the greatest horror at their treatment during the passage. Every morning many were taken out of the hold dead, and thrown (as they say) to be messes for the fish, and the rest could scarcely live for the horrid smell of the ship. It was in this cargo, or the one seized a short time before, and brought into Savannah, that, while off our coast, they were reduced to the necessity of eating the flesh from their own arms, for the sustenance of life. In conversing with such of them as had learned to speak the English tolerably well, I found that they had been to Sierra Leone and Sherbro, and were well acquainted with those places. Many of them had seen Kizeli, and said he was a good man ; and, when I mentioned the name of Paul Cuffee, half a dozen at least cried out, yes! yes! They seemed to know and appreciate his character. One of the boys in the parcel can write Arabic ; and I am told, in the other parcel which were sold, there were several who must have been great men in their country, and who made considerable proficiency in such learning as might be acquired by intercourse with the northern part of Africa. One of them asked, with great concern, if we would not send back those who were sold last year, and seemed distressed at being told that it would be impossible. A gentleman, who was present at the sale, describes their parting to their several masters as a most afflicting scene. When they bid each other farewell, never expecting to meet again, they wept most bitterly, and plainly proved that the feelings of nature were as strong in them as in any others. This is a dreadful subject to write about, my dear friend, but it is my duty to give you such a

detail: we must know the extent of the evil before we can apply a remedy.

The Africans whose release we are seeking will be left under the care of the same good old man already mentioned, and whom I cannot mention too often with too much commendation. God seems to have raised him up to be the friend of these unfortunate race of beings; he is never as happy as when in the midst of them, and they ever look up to him as their best friend. He is universally beloved in this place.— You cannot mention his name, but each one exclaims, ‘Daniel is the best man in the world, and the fittest person to manage these poor captives.’ So much is he devoted to this cause, and so generous is his nature, that, though very poor, he said he would give fifty dollars of his wages to the Society. He will conduct them to the ship, whenever they go on to Smith’s Island, if they be ordered there; indeed it would be impossible to get them willing to follow any other person, for they confide in no other.

I have now given you all the necessary information about the special object of my mission to this place. On Friday, I set out for Augusta, where I shall spend several days, thence to Savannah, Beaufort, Charleston, Georgetown, Wilmington, and so on to Virginia. It will be some time in July before I reach home, even without any unexpected delay.

With sincerity, I remain your friend,

WILLIAM MEAD.

E. B. CALDWELL, Esq.

Secretary American Colonization Society.

* * * Contributors will please to send their names and sums to DAVID ENGLISH, Esq. Treasurer, Georgetown, (D. C.)



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